

MONTANA STANDARDS FOR WRITING

The standards set in this document represent what research and experience have described as important in the process of writing. Writing is essential to thinking and learning. As a strategic, problem-solving process, writing is a key element of communication and a critical part of comprehension. In addition to being a developmental basic skill, writing is also indispensable to critical, ethical, and creative thinking. Writers use a range of skills and strategies in the process of writing to communicate with diverse audiences and for diverse purposes. Writing proficiency enables individuals to learn, make connections between their own and others' experiences, create meaning, and evaluate information.

Content Standards indicate what all students should know, understand and be able to do in a specific content area.

Benchmarks define our expectations for students' knowledge, skills and abilities along a developmental continuum in each content area. That continuum is focused at three points—at the end of grade 4, the end of grade 8 and grade 12.

Content Standard 1—Students write clearly and effectively.

Content Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.

Content Standard 3—Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.

Content Standard 4—Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Content Standard 5—Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to their own writing.

Content Standard 6—Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.

Writing Content Standard 1

Students write clearly and effectively.

Rationale

The goal of writing instruction at all grade levels is to enable all students to write clearly and effectively. While final drafts should be mechanically correct, good writing includes much more: organization, development of ideas with supporting detail, sentence fluency, word choice, and voice. Writers need many opportunities to write and revise their writing. As writers gain control of language, they discover the power of writing to communicate.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
1. organize text in paragraphs with clear beginning, middle, and end.	1. organize text in paragraphs with clear beginning, middle, and end, using transitions and logical sequence.	1. organize text in paragraphs with clear beginning, middle, and end, using effective transitions and logical sequence.
2. develop a main idea through some supporting details.	2. develop a main idea through relevant supporting details.	2. develop and elaborate main ideas through relevant and specific supporting details.
3. demonstrate awareness of personal voice, sentence structure, and word choice.	3. demonstrate some control of personal voice, sentence structure, and word choice.	3. demonstrate purposeful control of personal voice, sentence structure, and word choice.
4. apply conventions of standard written English (e.g., spelling, punctuation, usage) appropriate for grade level and purpose.	4. apply conventions of standard written English (e.g., spelling, punctuation, usage) appropriate for grade level and purpose.	4. apply conventions of standard written English (e.g., spelling, punctuation, usage) appropriate for grade level and purpose.

Writing Content Standard 2

Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.

Rationale

Writers use a variety of skills and strategies to construct a meaningful text. Writers progress recursively through five major stages: planning, composing, revising, editing and sharing/publishing. They need to learn, adapt and choose the writing strategies that best suit a particular writing task. By having ample time and frequent opportunities to write, writers grow in confidence and competence.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
1. plan writing by generating and organizing ideas and by considering purpose and audience.	1. plan writing by generating and organizing ideas through a variety of strategies and by considering purpose and audience.	1. plan writing by generating ideas through a variety of strategies, and organizing by analyzing purpose and audience.
2. write a draft that captures and organizes ideas.	2. write one or more drafts that capture and organize ideas.	2. write one or more drafts that capture, explore, and organize ideas.
3. revise writing at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels using feedback and guidance from others.	3. revise writing at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels using feedback from others.	3. revise writing by seeking feedback from others and making appropriate changes to improve text.
4. edit, with assistance, by correcting errors (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, usage).	4. edit, with some assistance, by correcting errors (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, usage).	4. edit by correcting errors (e.g., grammar, capitalization, punctuation, spelling, usage).
5. share/publish a legible final product.	5. share/publish a legible final product.	5. share/publish a legible final product.

Writing Content Standard 3

Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.

Rationale

Writers monitor their writing progress. They assess their strengths and recognize successes in their own and others' writing. By using criteria for effective writing, successful writers set goals for writing improvement and select strategies and resources to accomplish those goals.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. set goals and become aware of successes in their own and others' writing.2. share writing with others, listen to responses, ask questions, and offer positive comments to others.3. identify their strengths as writers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. set goals and analyze successes in their own and others' writing.2. share and discuss their own and others' writing for improvement and growth as writers.3. identify and describe strengths and weaknesses as writers.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. set goals and evaluate successes in their own and others' writing.2. seek and use feedback from others and offer constructive criticism to others.3. analyze and evaluate strengths and weaknesses as writers.

Writing Content Standard 4

Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Rationale

Without purpose and audience, writing has no meaning. The purposes of writing include reflection, clarification, inquiry, problem solving, entertainment, information, and persuasion, all of which help writers make sense of the world. Once writers have a purpose, they select audiences and make stylistic and structural choices that allow them to communicate effectively.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
1. identify the purpose for their writing and write appropriately.	1. identify and articulate the purpose for their writing and write appropriately.	1. identify and articulate the purpose for their writing and write appropriately.
2. choose audiences (e.g., self, peers, adults) appropriate to purposes and topics.	2. choose audiences (e.g., self, peers, adults) appropriate to purposes and topics.	2. choose audiences (e.g., self, peers, adults) appropriate to purposes and topics.
3. experience writing in different genres (e.g., descriptive writing).	3. experience writing in different genres (e.g., narrative writing).	3. experience writing in various genres (e.g., expository and persuasive writing).

Writing Content Standard 5

Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to their own writing.

Rationale

By reading diverse selections of fiction and nonfiction, classic and contemporary pieces, individuals acquire the tools to express themselves in writing. When individuals analyze and reflect on the forms they read, they understand more fully how to apply the characteristics of those forms in their own writing.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. identify the characteristics of different forms (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, technical, simple report).2. write using characteristics of different forms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. identify and analyze characteristics of different forms (e.g., narrative, journal, technical).2. write using characteristics of different forms.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. identify, analyze and evaluate characteristics of different forms (e.g., multiparagraph essays, persuasive, expository, argumentative).2. write using characteristics of different forms.

Writing Content Standard 6

Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.

Rationale

As lifelong learners, individuals initiate their own inquiries, find solutions to real problems, and use current and emerging technologies and information sources. Writing enables individuals to analyze and synthesize information, as well as to present solutions using traditional and technological media.

Benchmarks

Students will:

End of Grade 4	End of Grade 8	Upon Graduation—End of Grade 12
1. pose questions or identify problems.	1. pose questions or identify problems.	1. pose questions or identify problems.
2. use selected technologies and information sources.	2. find and use a variety of technologies and information sources.	2. find, evaluate, and use a variety of technologies and information sources.
3. identify explanations or solutions, and draw a conclusion based on the information.	3. identify several explanations or solutions, and draw conclusions based on their analysis of the information.	3. identify and investigate alternative explanations or solutions, and use criteria to draw and defend conclusions based on their analysis and evaluation of the information.
4. share information in appropriate ways for intended audiences.	4. share information in appropriate ways for intended audiences.	4. share information in appropriate ways for intended audiences.

Writing Performance Standards: A Profile of Four Levels

The Writing Performance Standards describe the writer’s knowledge, skills, and abilities on a continuum from kindergarten through grade 12. These descriptions provide a picture or profile of student achievement at the four performance levels—advanced, proficient, nearing proficiency, and novice.

<u>Advanced</u>	This level denotes superior performance.
<u>Proficient</u>	This level denotes solid academic performance for each benchmark. Students reaching this level have demonstrated competency over challenging subject matter, including subject-matter knowledge, application of such knowledge to real-world situations, and analytical skills appropriate to the subject matter.
<u>Nearing Proficiency</u>	This level denotes that the student has partial mastery or prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient work at each benchmark.
<u>Novice</u>	This level denotes that the student is beginning to attain the prerequisite knowledge and skills that are fundamental for work at each benchmark.

Grade 4 Writing

Advanced: (1) A fourth-grade student at the advanced level of writing demonstrates superior performance. He/she:

- (a) writes clearly and effectively by exhibiting strong organization, concrete development, and appropriate conventions/mechanics;
- (b) applies and experiments with a variety of skills and strategies in the writing process as he/she develops control of his/her writing;
- (c) shares and discusses his/her own writing and the writing of others to help make significant revisions;
- (d) writes, with assistance, for a variety of purposes and audiences and easily writes in different genres, including descriptive writing;
- (e) frequently proceeds with independent inquiries, with initial guidance; and
- (f) often uses a range of resources to seek information, solve problems, and communicate.

Proficient: (1) A fourth-grade student at the proficient level of writing demonstrates solid academic performance. He/she:

- (a) writes clearly and effectively by organizing the text with a clear beginning, middle, and end;
- (b) applies basic skills and strategies in the writing process as he/she develops as a writer;
- (c) shares and discusses his/her own writing and the writing of others;
- (d) recognizes and regularly practices using various forms of writing, including descriptive writing;
- (e) writes, with assistance, for a variety of purposes and audiences; and
- (f) responds to guided inquiry as he/she learns to search out information, solve problems, and communicate.

Nearing Proficiency: (1) A fourth-grade student at the nearing proficiency level of writing demonstrates partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) sometimes writes clearly and effectively by organizing text with a basic beginning, middle, and end;
- (b) applies basic skills and limited strategies in the writing process as he/she develops as a writer;
- (c) sometimes shares and discusses his/her writing and the writing of others to make limited changes in the text;

- (d) recognizes and begins to write, with assistance, in basic forms of writing, including descriptive writing;
- (e) writes for a specific purpose and with some sense of audience; and
- (f) conducts inquiries, with support, to find information to communicate.

Novice: (1) A fourth-grade student at the novice level of writing is beginning to attain prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) writes with limited clarity or effectiveness;
- (b) shows some emerging level of organization;
- (c) demonstrates limited awareness of the structure of his/her writing;
- (d) requires frequent guidance to apply basic skills and limited strategies as he/she learns to write;
- (e) shares his/her writing although his/her discussion usually lacks substance or focus;
- (f) requires guidance to recognize various forms of writing, including descriptive writing;
- (g) writes with a limited purpose, often showing no awareness of audience; and
- (h) needs assistance to conduct inquiries, find information, and communicate.

Grade 8 Writing

Advanced: (1) An eighth-grade student at the advanced level of writing demonstrates superior performance. He/she:

- (a) writes clearly and effectively by independently applying a range of skills and strategies to revise his/her writing;
- (b) eagerly seeks feedback to evaluate his/her writing and reflects on his/her growth as a writer;
- (c) identifies variations within writing forms and experiments as he/she applies these characteristics to his/her writing and in an expanded range of genres, including narrative writing;
- (d) successfully writes for a variety of purposes and audiences;
- (e) initiates his/her own inquiries; and
- (f) uses current technologies and information sources to communicate.

Proficient: (1) An eighth-grade student at the proficient level of writing demonstrates solid academic performance. He/she:

- (a) writes clearly and effectively by applying a range of skills and strategies in the writing process;
- (b) demonstrates the ability to respond to feedback, evaluate his/her writing, and reflect on his/her growth as a writer;
- (c) typically recognizes the structures of various forms of writing and applies these characteristics as he/she writes for a variety of purposes and audiences and in an expanded range of genres, including narrative writing; and
- (d) initiates his/her own inquiries and uses current technologies and information sources to communicate.

Nearing Proficiency: (1) An eighth-grade student at the nearing proficiency level of writing demonstrates partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) occasionally writes clearly and effectively by applying, with assistance, a range of skills and strategies in the writing process;
- (b) sometimes demonstrates the ability to evaluate writing and reflect on his/her growth as a writer;
- (c) recognizes and applies some characteristics of some forms of writing;
- (d) writes for a narrow range of purposes and audiences, and has limited practice in narrative writing;
- (e) sometimes initiates his/her own inquiries; and
- (f) uses current and emerging technologies and information sources to communicate.

Novice: (1) An eighth-grade student at the novice level of writing is beginning to attain prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) rarely writes clearly and effectively without assistance;
- (b) applies a limited range of skills and strategies in the writing process;
- (c) is reluctant to revise and needs assistance to evaluate his/her writing;
- (d) demonstrates confusion about forms and has difficulty applying the characteristics to his/her writing;

- (e) often lacks purpose and needs guidance to identify an audience or practice in narrative writing at the basic level;
- (f) requires direction and support to conduct inquiries; and
- (g) often uses current and emerging technologies and information sources to communicate.

Upon Graduation Writing

Advanced: (1) A graduating student at the advanced level of writing demonstrates superior performance. He/she:

- (a) consistently writes clearly and effectively, often about sophisticated subjects;
- (b) applies a range of skills and strategies in the writing process, eagerly seeking and responding to feedback and polishing his/her writing;
- (c) independently evaluates writing and reflects on his/her growth as a writer;
- (d) recognizes different levels of meaning as well as sophisticated variations within forms of writing;
- (e) takes risks and applies these characteristics to his/her own writing;
- (f) writes fluently for a variety of purposes and in different genre, including expository and persuasive, usually satisfying audiences;
- (g) demonstrates self-directed inquiry; and
- (h) makes effective use of current and emerging technologies and information sources to communicate.

Proficient: (1) A graduating student at the proficient level of writing demonstrates solid academic performance. He/she:

- (a) writes clearly and effectively by applying a range of skills and strategies in the writing process;
- (b) often seeks and responds to feedback to evaluate and revise writing, as well as reflects on his/her growth as a writer;
- (c) recognizes variations within the forms and often identifies different levels of meaning;
- (d) occasionally takes risks when applying these characteristics to write for a variety of purposes and audiences, and in different genres, including expository and persuasive writing;
- (e) initiates his/her own inquiries; and
- (f) uses current and emerging technologies and information sources to communicate.

Nearing Proficiency: (1) A graduating student at the nearing proficiency level of writing demonstrates partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) often writes clearly and effectively by applying a limited range of skills and strategies;
- (b) still needs assistance to revise work in response to feedback;
- (c) often needs guidance to evaluate work and reflect on his/her growth as a writer;
- (d) recognizes the forms of writing and applies basic characteristics to his/her own writing;
- (e) writes for a limited range of purposes and audiences, and has some experience writing in different genres, including expository and persuasive writing;
- (f) conducts inquiries, with assistance, and
- (g) uses current technologies and information sources to communicate.

Novice: (1) A graduating student at the novice level of writing is beginning to attain prerequisite knowledge and skills fundamental for proficient writing. He/she:

- (a) occasionally writes clearly at a basic level by applying selected skills and strategies;
- (b) needs assistance to write effectively;
- (c) is reluctant to revise and needs guidance to evaluate his/her writing or respond to feedback;
- (d) demonstrates limited understanding of his/her growth as a writer;
- (e) recognizes basic forms of writing and applies some basic characteristics to his/her writing;
- (f) often lacks purpose in writing, including expository and persuasive, and writes for a limited audience;
- (g) seldom conducts inquiries; and
- (h) uses current technologies and information sources, with assistance, to communicate.